

WORLD AFRICAN MEMORIAL LAUNCH AT UNITED NATIONS

President Moussa Traore of Mali, current CHairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), launched the competition for a Memorial to Africa and Her Diasporas to be built on Goree-Almadies, Senegal, West Africa. The launching took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5 October, 1988, at 10:00 AM.

The Memorial project was formally approved by the 1986 OAU Summit in Addis Ababa, following a proposal by President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, and details of the contest were worked out at an international conference in Libreville, Gabon. On 17 December 1987, a commemorative ceremony was held in Goree to lay the foundation stone of the Memorial.

Goree Island, off the coast of Senegal, West Africa, is the site of an infamous center of the Atlantic slave trade. The nearby Almadies Headland is the most westerly point of the African mainland.

The Senegalese Minister for Culture, Mr. Moustapha Ka, speaking of the launching, said it is symbolic that it should take place in New York, a city he described as one of the great capitals of the Black and African world. "It is a city which is the centre of the dialogue which many races, civilizations and nations are seeking to establish," he said.

In recent years sites of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade have been the destination of pilgrimages for many thousands of descendants of slaves from the Americas and throughout the world. The purpose of the Almadies Monument and its replica on Goree is to formalize the unity of Africans and of peoples of African descent, wherever they are today.

A fund has been established for the restoration of Goree and for the erection of the two memorials, under the joint auspices of AIFESPAC, the International Association of the Pan African Festival of Arts and Culture, the OAU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization. A total of \$100 million is expected to be raised. Designs to be submitted in the competition will also have to include plans for a theatre, an exhibition centre and other facilities.

Next year, 1989, will see the Fourth Festival of Pan African Arts and Culture.

See MEMORIAL, Page 7



Men of Alpha Phi Alpha, circa 1916

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